

Using the Montgomery GI Bill

Story by SFC Lisa Beth Snyder

The Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty was established in 1984 to help veterans return to civilian life after their honorable service in the armed forces.

Who's Eligible for the MGIB?

There are four categories of veterans who may be eligible for benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill.

Category 1

Entered active duty for the first time after June 30, 1985, served continuously for three years and contributed \$100 a month for the first 12 months of active duty.

Category 2

Had remaining entitlement under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance on Dec. 31, 1989, and had served on active duty between July 1, 1985, and June 30, 1988.

Category 3

Separated involuntarily after Feb. 2, 1991, or separated voluntarily under either the Voluntary Separation Incentive or Special Separation Benefit program. Veterans in this category must have contributed \$1,200 to the MGIB program before they were discharged.

Category 4

Contributed to the post-Vietnam era Veterans Educational Assistance Program and were on active duty with money in their education account on Oct. 9, 1996. Veterans must have elected to participate in the MGIB program by Oct. 9, 1997, and must have contributed \$1,200.

In addition...

Veterans must have a high school diploma or equivalent, or have completed 12 college semester hours toward a degree, before they are eligible for Montgomery GI Bill benefits. They must also have received honorable discharges.

The program pays benefits for 36 months of full-time college attendance or its equivalent, up to a maximum of \$800 a month.

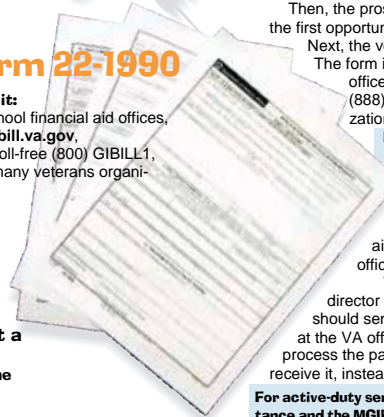
For the exact requirements for the Montgomery GI Bill, go to www.gibill.va.gov/education/c30pam.htm or call toll-free (888) GIBILL1.



VA Form 22-1990

Where to get it:

- at most school financial aid offices,
- at www.gibill.va.gov,
- by calling toll-free (800) GIBILL1,
- and from many veterans organizations.



What's Covered?

THE Montgomery GI Bill pays for more than just schooling at a college or university.

For veterans and service members who have paid into the program, the Montgomery GI Bill offers \$28,800 (as of Jan. 1, 2002) for 36 months of full-time college attendance or its equivalent for the following training:

- Post-secondary degrees at approved colleges and universities.
- Business colleges.
- Technical or vocational courses.
- Apprenticeship or job training.
- Flight training.
- Correspondence courses.
- Licensing and certification tests (go to www.gibill.va.gov/Education/LCVets.htm for the list of such tests eligible for GI Bill payment).

The Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve, which pays for education and training of selected Reserve and Guard members, covers all of the above training except for licenses and certifications. Some states also offer tuition assistance benefits to members of the National Guard.

Applying for Benefits

Veterans and service members who wish to use their Montgomery GI Bill benefits begin the process by talking to their prospective school's financial aid personnel, Department of Veterans Affairs officials said.

Then, the prospective GI Bill beneficiary should enroll at the first opportunity.

Next, the veteran should complete VA Form 22-1990.

The form is available at most school financial aid offices, at www.gibill.va.gov, by calling toll-free (888) GIBILL1 and from many veterans organizations.

For veterans or service members who are not using tuition-assistance benefits, the

next step is to take the completed form and their DD Form 214 copy 4 (veterans only) to the veterans-affairs representative at their school's financial aid office or job-training program. The school official will fill out VA Form 22-1999.

William G. Susling, the VA's assistant director of education services, said the school should send off all the forms together so they arrive at the VA office together. This enables VA personnel to process the paperwork for payment when they first receive it, instead of waiting for all three forms to arrive.

For active-duty service members using both tuition assistance and the MGIB under the new top-up program, there are three steps to receiving payment.

- 1 Request tuition assistance from an education counselor at the post education-services office.
- 2 Fill out VA Form 22-1990. Type or write "top-up" under 1A, "MGIB-Active Duty" block.
- 3 Send a copy of the approved tuition-assistance form and VA Form 22-1990 to the VA regional processing office. Addresses for the regional processing offices are available on the GI Bill website or by calling (888) GIBILL1.